

PACIFIC HORIZON

Connecting Pacific Islander Communities in Utah

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July 2003

Utah!
Where ideas connect

Message from the Director

Summer and warm weather is back and Polynesians are in a festive and celebratory mood! Our Governor's Initiative on Families Today (GIFT), featuring our award conferences recognizing the accomplishments of our students in sports, academia and leadership have come and gone. I attended seven high school graduation exercises and our Pacific Islanders stood out among their peers, draped up to their ears with colorful, traditional leis shipped from the islands. These ceremonies were followed with dances, parties, fiafia and katoanga nights and luaus, as families and aigas gathered together to celebrate!

Preparations are being made for the Samoan Heritage Week in July, followed by the Utah Polynesian Festival in August, and the Friendly Island Festival towards the beginning of September. The whole Polynesian community is busy with outdoor work, as landscaping and home improvement contract work is in

high demand. Many families are also gearing up for family reunions either here in Utah or are planning to travel to California, Hawaii or even back to their island homes.

Indeed the school year is over and much has been accomplished, but for most, this is only the beginning! In the past three years, we have had around two hundred Pacific Islander students graduating from high school every year. I hope that over the summer you will seriously make plans to continue with your education. As you do so, I would like to urge you to consider the applied technology centers and even trade apprenticeship programs. You may even want to look into the armed forces and the Utah National Guards and take advantage of the opportunities to learn skills and careers. For the remaining one hundred seniors that did not get to graduate from high school, please know that there are still a lot of opportuni-



ties for you to finish those classes that you missed. Get them done right away and then catch up with the rest!

Have a great summer and remember to be the cheerful, friendly, and hospitable Pacific Islanders that we all are!

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Advisory Council Focus

When Governor Leavitt came out with his 1000-Day Economic Plan, the Council decided to focus their efforts on collecting the base data from the school districts to enable the office to gauge exactly how Pacific Islander students were doing, and to be in a better position to recommend what should be done to curb the current school dropout rate and to increase the number and quality of high school graduates.

Since last November, we have been visiting the Alpine, Granite, Jordan and Salt Lake School Districts and have tried

to develop a working relationship with their administrations. We have been given a lot of information that was not made available before, and we are now scheduling follow-up meetings to request the remaining data that we need. We strongly feel that the success of our students in the public schools will depend on this partnership that we are nurturing with the school districts.

In the last couple of months, we have met with the Lieutenant Governor Olene Walker, and also the Governor's Chief of Staff, Rich McKeown, up



Janise Macanas
Advisory Council Chair

dating them on what we are doing with the school districts. In August, we will be meeting with Governor Michael Leavitt and we are hoping to present to him, at that time, our completed report on the education of Pacific Islander students in the Utah public schools.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the State Office of Pacific Islander Affairs is to review state policy, agencies, programs and projects to determine their impact on the Polynesian community in Utah, and to make recommendations to the Governor and state agencies on how they can increase or improve their level of responsiveness to Polynesian citizens.



2003 All-State Banquet



GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE ON FAMILIES TODAY

GIFT enables the Pacific Islander population of Utah to come together to celebrate the accomplishments of our children and reinforce the strong family values of our Pacific Islander cultures.

The 7th Annual All State Awards Banquet was held again this year at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Salt Lake City on March 14, 2003. A total of 26 Pacific Islander athletes were honored for attaining All State during the year.

In **Football**, the following were recognized for **Honorable Mention** (7): *Sau Hafoka* (Woods Cross), *John Latu* and *Jay 'Unga* (West), *'Eti Samani* (Provo), *Alfred Silva* (Brighton), *'Osikā Va'enuku* (Kearns), and *Tauni Vakapuna*

(Hunter). In the **Second Team** there were 10: *Derek Afalava*, *Zach Ama*, *Ron Tonga'onevai*, *Fainga Vakapuna* (Hunter), *Sione Hafoka* (Woods Cross), *Sateki Nau* (Spanish Fork), *Thor Pili* (Timpanogos), *Sese Takai* (Murray), *Sione Tu'atonga* and *Juliu Ulugia* (Granger). In the **First Team**, there were 7: *Matt Ah You* (Lone Peak), *Ray Feinga* (Hunter), *Isley Filiaga* (Timpanogos), *John Ika* (Bountiful), *Tevita Kefu* (Juan Diego), *Phil Poloa* (Jordan)

and *Brian Soi* (Timpview). In **Volleyball**, *Noelle Filimoe'atu* (Timpanogos) and *Ilima Sam Fong* (Hurricane) both made it to the State First Team.

The speakers at the banquet this year were Hiram de Fries, administrative assistant to the football head coach at the University of Utah, Defensive Tackle Coach Mike Tuiasosopo from the University of Utah, and the new Head Coach for Southern Utah University, Gary Andersen.

2003 Junior High Award Conference

The Granite School District's Office of Education Equity again hosted the Junior High School Young Achievers Award Conference at the Eisenhower Junior High Auditorium. This year there were over 700 Pacific Islanders packed into the auditorium. The Utah - Free Wesleyan Church Tongan Youth Brass Band's cultural music certainly set the celebration mood for the conference.

A total of 196 Pacific Islander students were recognized (7th graders - 83, 8th graders - 53, and 9th graders - 60)

who had maintained a cumulative 3.5 grade point average, or better. Of these students, 112 of them were from the Granite School District, 33 from the Salt Lake, 19 from Alpine, 14 from Jordan, 10 from Provo, 4 from Weber, 3 from Nebo, and 1 from Tooele.

Seventeen (17) students were able to maintain a 4.0 grade point average. In the 7th grade were: *Pearl Aso*, *Jackie Jaeger*, and *Julianne Tialavea* (Jordan); *Alexis Kaufusi* (Provo); *Jarett Tauiliili* (Granite), and *Latoya 'Utu'one* (Salt Lake). In the 8th

Grade were: *Jenelle Dapp*, *Caroline Kichiro*, *Tamara McNeece*, *Jerome Naea* (Granite); *Elysee Faalafua* and *Jordan Te'o* (Alpine); and *Malia Iosefa* (Davis). In the 9th Grade were: *Rose Falemaka* and *Una Moala* (Granite); and *Malosi Te'o* and *Keli'i Wesley* (Alpine). Another seventeen 7th graders, nine 8th graders and nine 9th graders had maintained a 3.9 gpa and better. To these 52 students, aside from their trophies and medallions, State Farm Insurance awarded them with scholarships amounting to a total of \$2,465.00

2003 Senior High Award Conference

The 7th Pacific Islander Young Achievers Award Conference for High School was graced with the presence of both Governor Michael O. Leavitt and the First Lady Jacalyn S. Leavitt. The Utah Free Wesleyan Tongan Youth Brass Band was playing music, and the First Lady led the members of the Pacific Islander Advisory Council in a display of Polynesian dancing to set a real celebration mood for the whole conference.

Also in attendance was Melanie Reese, Executive Director of GIFT; Jim Robertson, State Farm Insurance Agency Field

Executive; Shirl Clarke, the new Division Director for Community Development in the Department of Community and Economic Development; Pacific Islander community and church leaders, and about 400 parents. Students from West High School provided the entertainment.

A total of 137 students (9th Graders - 24, 10th Graders - 38, 11th Graders - 39, 12th Graders - 36) were honored for having maintained a cumulative 3.50 gpa and better during the school year. Of these students 41 were from Granite, 31 from Salt Lake, 27 from Alpine, 18 from Provo, and

10 from the Jordan School District. State Farm Insurance awarded twenty-six (26) incentive scholarships for a total amount of \$2,345.00.

Seven had the distinction of maintaining a 4.0 cumulative grade point average. In the 9th Grade: *Rebekah Bryant* (Salt Lake) and *Jacob Abraham* (Tooele); 10th Grade: *Mikaelle Giffin* (Alpine) and *Emma Lincoln* (Murray); 11th Grade: *Nathan Samu* and *Nephi Stone* (Granite); and 12th Grade: *Sara Raymond* (Salt Lake).

"The Aloha Spirit is the coordination of mind & heart within each person. It brings each person to the Self. Each person must think & emote good feelings to others....."



Recognizing the importance of quality education for Pacific Islander students, State Farm awards scholarships to motivate our Young Achievers.



2003 Southern Utah Award Conference

Over fifty of the Polynesian community in Southern Utah gathered to the Desert Hills Intermediate School in St. George on Friday evening, June 13, 2003 to participate in their Pacific Islander Young Achievers Award Conference. Wayne Reis, President of the Southern Utah Polynesian Association welcomed everyone and con-

ducted the proceedings. Melanie Reese, Executive Director of GIFT and Bill Afeaki presented the awards.

Eighteen students were honored for their academic achievements. *Kalehua Harward*, a 7th grader from Dixie Middle School and *Amber Fullwood*, a senior from Snow Can-

yon High School, both had maintained a 4.00 cumulative grade point average.

Added Focus to GIFT Conferences

For the last six years, the Pacific Islander GIFT Conferences have been celebrations of our students' achievements in the public schools in sports, academia and leadership. As families and the community came together in these celebrations, younger siblings would watch the older ones' successes and aspire to follow in their footsteps. Speakers would address issues of concern to

our communities and also motivate Pacific Islanders to continue to reinforce and perpetuate the cultural values that have strengthened our familial ties for generations.

In our 2003 GIFT conferences, it was decided that some of our Pacific Islander families who have been successful should be recognized and honored. Nominations for these families would be sought through the Pacific

Islander Advisory Council and community leaders. It was also further decided that some recognition also be given to Pacific Islander educators and teachers, and nominations would be sought from the school districts and schools that we have networked with in the Young Achievers program.

2003 Pacific Islander Families of the Year

Through members of the Pacific Islander Advisory Council and community leaders, nominations were sought and received. The criteria that were given for these nominations included: children receiving awards in our Young Achievers conferences; family's active participation in community service; and children non-involvement with the law. It was further decided that three families would be recognized in the Junior High conference and another three would be honored in the Senior High. The following were the 2003 Pacific Islander Families of the Year:

James & Moana Burges
Alpine, Utah

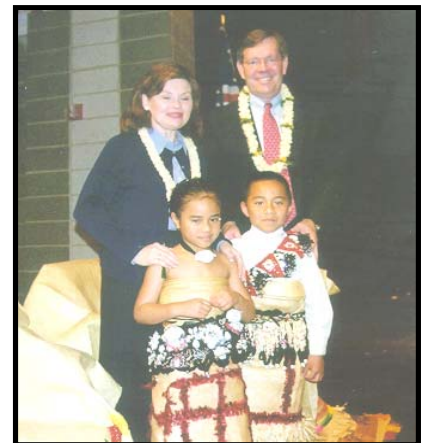
Manase & Lomia Tuatagaloa
Ogden, Utah

Paea & Nightingale Sotele
West Valley City, Utah

Charles (Sale) & Joyce Ah You
Orem, Utah

'Alama & Losaline 'Ulu'ave
Salt Lake City, Utah

'Aisea & Kiliuina Pilivi
West Valley City, Utah



Pacific Islander Education Awards

There were four separate Education awards that were established this year to be presented at our annual GIFT conferences. Two would be presented in the Junior High award conference. One will be for a Pacific Islander Teacher of the Year award, which is for teachers in Elementary and Junior High Schools. The other will be a Pacific Islander Educational Support of the Year award, earmarked for Pacific Islanders working in the schools but who are not teachers.

The other two awards are to be presented

at the Senior High School Young Achievers' Conference. One will be for another Pacific Islander Teacher of the Year award, which is for teachers in high school. The other is for the Pacific Islander Educator of the Year award and this is earmarked for any Pacific Islander working either in public school administration or in higher education.

The recipients of the 2003 Education awards were:

'Oli Tuia
Pacific Islander Teacher of the Year

Alema Te'o
Pacific Islander Teacher of the Year

'Ailine Lao
Pacific Islander Educational Support

Dr. Hiagi Wesley
Pacific Islander Educator of the Year

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Pacific Islander Advisory Council

Janise Macanas, (801) 492-0220
Chairperson, Hawaiian Representative

Supilani Ma'ilei, (801) 322-4155
Vice Chairperson, Tongan Representative

Salesi Havili, (801) 328-3006
Tongan Representative

Otto Johansson, (801) 259-5558
Tongan Representative

Charlene Lui, (801) 222-9274
Hawaiian Representative

Veisia Mo'ungaafi, (801) 250-4733
Tongan Representative

Selena Roberts, (801) 292-5949
Samoa Representative

Celeste Tonga, (801) 392-8962
Maori Representative

Uina Vakapuna, (801) 366-9348
Tongan Representative

Hiagi M. Wesley, (801) 221-5105
Fijian Representative

Phone: 801-538-8691
Fax: 801-538-8678
Email: wafeaki@utah.gov

Department of Community & Economic Development
State Office of Pacific Islander Affairs
324 South State Street, Ste 5
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2321

We're on the Web!
www.utah.org

Academy for Math, Engineering, and Science

Following a most successful 2002 Winter Olympics, Governor Michael O. Leavitt came out with Utah's 1000-Day Economic Plan. One of his three main strategies in this plan is to continue to invest in people through education – *"In the information age, education is economic fuel. We must transform Utah's education system to be tech-smart, competency-measured and market fast"*. In his action steps, he set out to double by 2005 the number of engineering, math and computer science students by creating New Century Academy and High Tech High Schools.

The first Academy for Math, Engineering and Science will be opening this fall in the 2003-2004 school year with 9th and 10th grade classes, and these will be housed at Cottonwood High School. The office

jumped at this opportunity and did an initial mail out to all the Pacific Islander students in the 7th and 8th grades who had received academic awards in its Young Achievers program in 2002. When the deadline for applications was extended, the office did a follow-up mail out to parents, pointing out the importance of this new opportunity for our Pacific Islander students.

Of the 291 applications that were received, 161 (55.3%) were Caucasians, 55 (18.9%) Hispanic, 25 (8.59%) Pacific Islander, 12 (4.12%) Asian, 9 (3.09%) African American, and 9 (3.09%) Native Americans. This represents an excellent response from our Pacific Islander parents and students, and we would like to congratulate them!

Upcoming Community Events

- Samoan Heritage Week: July 20th—26th
Contact: Jacob Fitisemanu, (801) 265-7564
- Utah Polynesian Festival: August 8th—9th
Contact: Tai Macatiag, (801) 867-5117
- The Malamala Light of Knowledge Banquet: August 9th
Contact: Tai Macatiag, (801) 867-5117
- Micronesian Day: September 6th
Contact: Mark Norman, (801) 955-4403

ANNOUNCEMENT

- There are currently 5 (five) vacancies for the Pacific Islander Advisory Council, needing Samoan representatives; call (801) 538-8691
- Pacific Islander candidate for Mayor of Salt Lake City—Molonai Hala. Pacific Islanders who are U.S. citizens, 18 and over, please register to vote. Call (801) 556-0819